



*Linkages to Learning, a Collaborative School-based Partnership among the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Montgomery County Public Schools, Public and Nonprofit Agencies, Families and Communities*

## Making a Difference:

### Antony Adams, Case Manager



At Maryvale ES, Antony Adams has been working with one family whose children were recently reunited with their mother following a long period of separation. Finding affordable and accessible housing has been a major barrier for the family, but by successfully negotiating with the housing authority, Adams found the family a home that allowed the children to remain in their school. This was critical since one child with special needs had made significant progress at Maryvale.

Working with his Linkages colleagues, Antony linked family members to those mental health and parenting services necessary for them to make it through this difficult life transition.

Adams and his team also helped the mom to find a job that allowed her to care for her special needs child and identified financial assistance so the other children could attend enriching after-school activities. By collaborating with the County's Abused Person's Program and Linkages, this mom is slowly but steadily making strides to building a happier and more cohesive family.

Carol Binta, Maryvale's site coordinator notes, "We consider Antony to be a real gift to our Linkages families, with a special knack for accessing needed services and recognizing strengths in both children and parents. Whether it's locating housing, financial help, food or summer camps, Antony has earned a reputation for working tirelessly with families who have multiple challenges and very few resources."

An African American male raised by his mom, Adams said, "Ever since I graduated from college I've wanted to work for a grassroots program like Linkages to Learning so I could have a "hands-on" influence in helping families. Because many of our families do not have the direction or lack the resources to advance in life, Linkages to Learning has given me the opportunity to empower them to make better life choices. My colleagues from Rockville's Youth and Family Services who work alongside me at Maryvale truly offer me the ultimate support to carry out these tasks," said Adams. A graduate of Coppin State College with a B.S. in Social Sciences, Adams is enrolled in Bowie State University's Guidance and Counseling program, completing his M.Ed.. During his free time, Adams enjoys exercising, biking, visiting Caribbean Islands, and learning the art of woodworking.

## Community Giving Brightens Holidays

Thanks to the generous contributions of donations and time from our many dedicated community partners, Linkages served 663 families for Thanksgiving and 737 families with 2,036 children for the December holidays. The contributions, whether from individual efforts or large collection drives, are vitally important in helping families stretch their limited resources and celebrate and enjoy the holidays. Linkages' efforts are coordinated as part of the Montgomery County Holiday Giving Coalition brought together by the Montgomery County Volunteer Center.



**Maryvale ES girls feeling proud of their graham cracker creations!**

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## Making a Difference: Ana Lilia Solis, Mental Health Counselor

Originally from Mexico, Ana Lilia Solis, mental health counselor at Silver Spring's paired elementary schools, Pine Crest and Montgomery Knolls, finds her own experience as a recent immigrant helpful in understanding the families she serves, many of whom are from Latin American, Africa and Asia. "Like many new Americans, I am challenged to push myself out of my comfort zone and to do things that make me feel a little anxious or uncomfortable, such as talking in front of large groups or trying new food," said Solis. "But Linkages gives me many opportunities to grow professionally and stimulates my interest in learning new things. When I began working at Linkages, I was intimidated by the idea of using the DSM-IV to do assessments. I was also uncertain about doing an intake and explaining the necessary forms to the parents. Over time, my clinical supervisor, my peers, and my administrative supervisor have helped me acquire new skills and become a more mature professional," said Solis.

Reflecting on a recent case, Solis describes a child referred to her for acting out behavior.

"He was very aggressive with his peers, used bad language, had difficulty concentrating and following directions in class, and didn't seem motivated to do his school work. The boy was sent to the principal's office at least twice a week and was suspended several times during the school year. The boy's mother said that because of the frequency of phone calls from the school, she was suffering from anxiety and felt depressed. The boy's father said that he had to be there for his son because it didn't seem to him that many people liked him," said Solis.

"My two co-workers and I spent many hours talking about ways to support this family. I met with the boy alone and with the boy and his parents on a weekly basis. I worked with the family during the school year and the boy participated in a group summer program I organized. The boy continued struggling with hyperactivity, distractibility and aggressiveness, so I recommended that his parents take him for an evaluation.

Jerilin Mesa, the case manager and my co-worker, got directly involved in linking the family with his pediatrician, who prescribed medication that, according to the teacher, helps him stay focused and motivated. Currently, the boy participates in a social skills group and is able to name children he plays with at recess," said Solis.

Solis observes "Linkages allows me to implement "outside the box thinking," engaging parents in the therapeutic process of their children. The school-based environment and the flexibility to meet the parents within their comfort zone is a critical part of my work."

Solis credits her success to the supportive relationship she enjoys from school personnel and Linkages partners from Silver Spring Branch of the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington. Solis is currently finishing up a Ph.D. dissertation in Counseling.

*"It was painful to see this boy trying to make sense of his situation and to observe his parents' struggle to understand how the school works, but Linkages allows me a unique opportunity to see the child in his various contexts: in the school and with his family," said Solis. "Not so long ago, on our way to the group meeting I was going to have with him, he asked me with a big smile on his face, 'Ana Lilia, am I handsome?' When I started working with him he usually talked about being a bad boy. Now he says that he's cute and handsome!"*



**Members of Maryland Assembly of School Based Health Centers and health promoters with elected officials, including Maryland State Senators Robert Garagiola and Jennie Forehand.**

## School Based Health Centers Lead the Way

Thirteen parents serving as health promoters at Broad Acres' Linkages to Learning School-Based Health Center (SBHC) joined with healthcare providers and leaders at Maryland Assembly on School Based Health Care's annual Legislative Advocacy Reception in Annapolis. Linkages mental counselor, Ana Lilia Solis, joined Broad Acres parent health promoters, Emerita Larios and Elizabeth Ramos, in highlighting the value of the SBHC's accessible, comprehensive and culturally competent services.



## Making a Difference: Michelle Blumenthal, Case Manager/Site Coordinator

What makes Michelle Blumenthal, case manager/site coordinator at Highland ES in Wheaton, so special? Like many of Linkages site coordinators, she's led a team of school-based professionals committed to providing culturally competent, holistic family support services.

But Allison Stearns, director of Kensington Wheaton Youth Services of the Mental Health Association, observes that Michelle's commitment goes well beyond providing good care. "The prevention, early intervention and educational support services Michelle provides to families are quite exceptional. Although Highland is one of Linkages well-established sites, Michelle stepped into her role during a period of transition. She assumed other duties on an interim basis and mentored new members of her team, sharing her contagious energy and commitment to families. Her enthusiasm has helped her draw in many volunteers and community partners, expanding services at the school," reports Stearns, who oversees eight Linkages programs spanning Wheaton and Kensington.

Along with establishing computer classes and beefing up Highland's English as a Second Language, mother's support and summer family literacy programs, Michelle helped "grow" the MSI Community Soccer program at Highland ES.

According to Blumenthal, "The parents, MSI and Linkages staff worked hard to make the program successful. While I reached out to register students, the parents joined in, serving as coaches and team managers, and even landscaped our fields to prepare them for the games. We communicated closely with the MSI coordinator to keep the program running smoothly."

Doug Schuessler, MSI's executive director, observes, "Our coordinator, Angel Hernandez, could always count on Michelle to keep things going. With over 200 students enrolled in the program, this was no small task. Michelle provided invaluable assistance in helping us to understand the intensive requirements of this program. I'm not really talking about the soccer aspect; I mean that's our expertise. But engaging the school's Latino parents, and especially the dads and moms who volunteer as coaches, takes someone the community knows and trusts. We just couldn't run this kind of program without that kind of support," explained Schuessler.

Believing that the program serves as a terrific outlet for a number of children with social difficulties, anger issues and abundant energy, Blumenthal notes that "the children were previously spending time on the streets after school. But given an opportunity to play a sport they enjoy, they flocked to the program. For many of the program's immigrant families, soccer broke down the language barrier, as families could speak the language of soccer rather than English, Spanish or another language."

Having been raised in the Washington area, Michelle credits her family and religious values as having been a significant influence in her decision to work for Linkages. "Growing up in a diverse area, I've always been committed to empowering populations who haven't had the opportunity to advocate for themselves, and I feel everyone deserves an equal chance to contribute to their community."

Blumenthal concludes, "I've seen that happen at Highland through parent involvement in our many programs. Not only that, but I'm learning from them too! My Spanish has improved tremendously over the last two years, and I attribute my progress to our parents from El Salvador, Guatemala, Bolivia, Mexico, Uruguay, Argentina and other Latin American countries."

## Healthy Hero Promotes Family Health

Veronica Ramirez, School Health Services' manager of Linkages' SBHC Multicultural Health Promoters Program was awarded a 2005 Healthy Hero Award by AMERIGROUP for outstanding leadership and innovation. Ramirez will use the \$1,000 award to support Linkages' health fair at Broad Acres.

Ramirez meets with parents from the school-based health centers and with partners, providing training about health topics, including asthma, tobacco use, nutrition and children's healthcare. The health promoters share information with family, friends and neighbors and assist with health fairs and community events.



*Health promoters Emerita Larios, Sergio Salgado, Elizabeth Ramos, Juan Rivas and their children join Veronica Ramirez in celebrating the conclusion of the 2005 Freedom Walk in Sandy Spring.*

## Making a Difference: Christine Hermann, School Community Health Nurse

Christine Herman, a school community health nurse at Harmony Hills Elementary School, is assigned to one of three Linkages School Based Health Centers in the county, working with an interdisciplinary team so that students are healthy and ready to learn. Christine is joined by a health room assistant from the County's School Health Services, a nurse practitioner from Catholic University's School of Nursing, physicians from Children's National Medical Center, social service and mental health professionals from the Mental Health Association's Kensington Wheaton Youth Services and school personnel.

One large family, previously living in a nearby jurisdiction, was recently reunified after the children were adopted by their Montgomery County grandmother. Each of the children has asthma, with some requiring emergency care during severe attacks.

According to Christine, "Reducing the incidence of asthma is a high priority for all of us here. We keep close watch on all of our students with asthma.

With access to the School-Based Health Center, we can provide frequent check-ups and prevent complications that can lead to discomfort and more serious illnesses, as well as days of missed school."

By developing and monitoring individual asthma plans for each of the children, and by educating their grandmother to manage their condition more carefully, Christine has made a tremendous difference.



Because the children initially were receiving health care benefits outside Maryland, traveling the distance to secure medications and other services was especially challenging. But Christine worked closely with Anna Rosales, Linkages case manager, to assure that transportation would not be a barrier, and together they helped the family apply for Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP) to improve their access to care, linking them with a private pediatrician to help address their chronic health conditions.

Since Linkages began working closely with this family, none of the children have had to use emergency room services.

Joan Glick, nurse administrator with oversight for the School Based Health Centers observes "Christine is a dedicated nurse who strives to provide the best services to the diverse children and families of Harmony Hills. Working with her Linkages colleagues and with the pediatrician and health room technician at Harmony Hills, Christine is assuring that this family is coping with this complex condition and reducing their reliance on expensive hospital care. Just as important, she linked this very vulnerable family to Maryland's Children's Health Program, funded by the federal government to help impoverished children to be safe and healthy."

Christine has a BS in nursing and a Masters in community public health nursing. Although her outside hobbies include fitness and going to the beach, Christine feels her real passion is serving the community and students who lack proper health care. "My goal is helping students to stay in school, and by working in the School-Based Health Center, I can use my expertise to link families to the services they need, while advocating for their health."



## Partners in Learning Literature Club

The Commonwealth Foundation supports educational programs and projects assisting disadvantaged youth, including its Partners in Learning program. At Maryvale, Partners in Learning sponsors an after-school Literature Club, providing supplemental reading and writing instruction to children in jeopardy of academic failure.

Maryvale ES and Linkages collaborate by providing appropriate space, structure and homework assistance for the Literature Club's 30 students. Linkages engages parent and middle-school volunteers to assist teachers and organizes snacks for the Monday through Thursday after-school program, led by Maryvale teachers Mrs. Ford (pictured) and Mrs. Khalilian.



## Thanks to our Donors and Community Partners



### COAT DRIVES:

**Carol Evans, Charles Fleischman and Wyngate ES PTA's "WE CARE,"** Linkages families.

**Chris Lawrence and Westbrook PTA:** Montgomery Knolls ES and Pine Crest ES.

**Connie Jacobs and Farmland ES PTA:** Harmony Hills ES.

**Courtney Freeman and Rosemary Hills Primary School PTA:** Weller Road ES.

**Joanne Harron and the Montgomery College Nursing Club, Takoma Park:** Linkages schools.

**Joanne Peter Demchok and Promenade Apartment residents:** Silver Spring International MS.

**Jody Gans and North Chevy Chase PTA:** Highland ES.

**Julie Good and Richard Montgomery HS Rocket Corps students:** Linkages schools.

**Kathy Thompson:** Gaithersburg ES.

**Margaret Flagg, family and friends:** new coats for 6 children, Gaithersburg MS.

**Montgomery Knolls ES Title I Office Knitting Guild:** sweaters with hats, Montgomery Knolls ES.

**Mr. Lewis and Greenwood ES:** Wheaton Woods ES.

**Pam Gibson, Stacy Krogh and Westland MS PTA:** Loiderman/Parkland MS.

**Sharlene Monroe and Long & Foster Realty:** winter coats, gloves and clothing.

**Shirley Sagawa, Roxann Steinberg and the Chevy Chase ES PTA:** Rolling Terrace ES.

**Suzi Kaplan and the Wonders:** clothing and coats, Montgomery Knolls ES and Pine Crest ES.

**Wendy Korrick and Bethesda- Chevy Chase HS PTSA:** Eastern MS

**WTOP & The Man Club:** Silver Spring International MS and Linkages schools.

### FOOD AND GIFTS:

**Adam Williams:** toys and gifts, Summit Hall ES.

**Alicia Youmans and Montgomery County Dept. of Environmental Protection:** toys and gifts for 2 families, Montgomery Knolls ES.

**Allen Chapel AME Church:** Thanksgiving food baskets, Greencastle ES and Banneker MS.

**Alta Hayes:** toys and gifts for a family, Highland ES.

**Amita Mongia and Garrett Park ES families:** 21 Thanksgiving food baskets, Viers Mill ES.

**Amy Hixenbaugh and Chevy Chase Bank's Mortgage Systems:** toys and gifts for 2 children, Viers Mill ES.

**Ann Prentice and St. Mark's Orthodox Church:** food for 9 families for Thanksgiving and winter holidays, Wheaton Woods ES and for 7 families at Harmony Hills ES.

**Banneker MS staff:** dozens of toys and gifts, Greencastle ES and Banneker MS.

### Aurora Gesni and Educational Services Incorporated:

3 Thanksgiving food baskets, and food, toys and gifts for 4 families, Highland ES.

**Beth Anne Nessel, Brenda Botchway, and Montgomery County Safe Kids Coalition:** 10 bike helmets, Greencastle ES and Banneker MS.

**Beth Boyd and the Silver Spring YMCA:** toys and gifts for 4 families, Rolling Terrace ES.

**Bethesda Chevy Chase YMCA:** toys and gifts, Greencastle ES and Banneker MS.

**Bethesda United Church of Christ:** 4 Thanksgiving food baskets, Viers Mill ES.

**Betsy Roush and Aspen Hill Cooperative Nursery School staff and families:** Thanksgiving food baskets for 4 families, Wheaton Woods ES; toys and gifts for 35 children and families, Harmony Hills ES.

**Beverly Lee:** toys and gifts for a child, Weller Road ES.

**B'nai Israel Congregation:** Thanksgiving food baskets, grocery gift cards, toys and gifts for 36 children and parents, Weller Road ES.

**Brie Jeweler-Bentz and family:** toys and gifts for a child at Broad Acres ES.

**Broad Acres ES staff:** 70 toys and gifts, Broad Acres ES.

**Bruce Kahan, Joanne Hurt, staff and families All Saints All Day Child Care Centers:** dozens of toys and gifts for Linkages children.

**Carolyn M. Knipe and Brownie Troop #3406 of Olney:** "snack packs" and Thanksgiving food, Harmony Hills ES; Thanksgiving food and gift cards to Honey Baked Ham, Parkland MS.

**Carolynn J. McIntyre:** toys and gifts for Linkages children.

**Caryn Nagler and APT Associates, Inc:** toys and gifts for 30 children, Harmony Hills ES.



**Lilli Maysonet, site coordinator at New Hampshire Estates ES and Oak View ES, Giselle Pautrat, case manager at Broad Acres ES, Desiree Magney, chair of the B-CC HS PTSA toy drive, and student volunteer Caroline Williams.**





## Thanks to our Donors and Community Partners



*Happy student smiles at Broad Acres ES gift fair.*

**Edith Williams, Connie Paulson and Millian Memorial United Methodist Church:** food donations, toys and gifts, Parkland MS/Loiederman MS.

**Ellen and Gary Staggers of Silver Spring:** toys and gifts for a Linkages family.

**Erin Garcia and family:** toys and gifts, Viers Mill ES.

**Faith United Methodist Church:** food, gifts and toys for several families, Maryvale ES.

**Connie Jacobs, families and staff of Farmland ES PTA:** 5 boxes of food and dozens of toys and gifts, Harmony Hills ES.

**Father Francis Kazista, Cynthia Norris and St. John the Baptist Catholic Church:** Thanksgiving grocery cards, Kennedy Cluster.

**Father Gregory Safchuk and St. Mark Orthodox Church:** 7 Thanksgiving food baskets and 7 winter holiday food baskets, Highland ES.

**Father Michael Mellone and St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church:** Thanksgiving grocery cards, Kennedy Cluster.

**Father Thomas Kalita, Anne Marie Prangle and St. Peter's Catholic Church:** Thanksgiving grocery cards, Kennedy Cluster.

**First Book Montgomery County:** 1,000 books for holiday giving, Linkages families.

**Friendship Star Quilters of Gaithersburg:** stuffed stockings for 22 children, Wheaton Woods ES.

**Georgette Bachinsky:** gift cards for 5 Linkages teens.

**Greg Brannan, Harani Dansamo, Grume Kefenie and Shady Grove Adventist Hospital:** toys and gifts for Linkages families.

**Gwen Mott and Aspen Hill Christian Church:** 15 Thanksgiving food baskets, Harmony Hills ES.

**Headline Hair Designers:** toys and gifts for 10 children, Broad Acres ES.

**Heather Luxenburg and the Forestville Office staff:** toys and gifts, Highland ES.

**Harmony Hills ES staff:** toys and gifts for families, Harmony Hills ES.

**Highland ES staff:** food and gifts for 5 families, Highland ES.

**Holy Cross Church:** Thanksgiving grocery cards, food, gifts cards for 10 children, Highland ES.

**Hope Worldwide:** toys and gifts, Greencastle ES and Banneker MS.

**James Dodson:** toys and gifts, Summit Hall ES.

**Janis Crosson and the Lockheed Martin:** 100 Thanksgiving food baskets for families at Gaithersburg ES, Gaithersburg MS, Parkland MS, Fox Chapel ES, Weller Road ES, Greencastle ES, Banneker MS, Eastern MS and Summit Hall ES.

**Jeanette Jackson, staff and families of the Brookhaven Child Development Center:** dozens of toys and gifts for Linkages children.

**Linkages staff members:** dozens of toys and gifts as well as food and grocery gift cards for families.

**Cedar Ridge Community Church:** school supplies and Thanksgiving baskets, Greencastle ES and Banneker MS.

**Chip Groh, Julie McDermott & Danny:** toys and gifts for 3 children, Weller Road ES.

**Chris Dutton and HMS Host employees:** toys, gifts and food for Linkages families.

**Chris Hopkinson and employees of Frontier Tax Solutions:** toys and gifts, Summit Hall ES.

**Chrissie Herman and family:** toys and gifts for 6 children, Harmony Hills ES and Viers Mill ES.

**Christine Moore and Research Triangle Institute employees:** food, toys and gifts for 3 families, Rolling Terrace ES.

**Cindy Dibbs and employees of MCPS' Office of the Controller:** toys and gifts for a family, Montgomery Knolls ES.

**Connie Iacomini, staff and families of Silver Spring Child Care Center :** Thanksgiving food basket, Montgomery Knolls ES.

**Dana and Stephen Pupkar:** toys and gifts, Weller Road ES.

**Darin Brown and Journey's Crossing:** toys and gifts, Kennedy Cluster.

**David Cohen and employees of David's Beautiful People in Rockville:** toys and gifts for 24 children, Greencastle ES and Banneker MS.

**Deb Danielson, Madeline Griffin, Patricia Brashears and Georgian Forest Elementary School staff:** dozens of toys and gifts, Kennedy Cluster.

**Debbie Sullivan, staff and families of Academy Hills Child Development Ctr:** toys and gifts for 50 Linkages children.

**Desiree and Daniel Magney, Peggy and Jerome Robbins, Georgia Guhin, Ellen Schneider, Marie Cohen, Caroline Williams, Alexis McLane and BCC PTSA families and staff:** toys, gifts and food for 100 children and families, Broad Acres ES, Montgomery Knolls ES, Pine Crest ES, New Hampshire Estates ES, Oak View ES.

**Donna Wade:** toys and gifts, Weller Road ES.

**Eastern MS PTA,** toys and gifts for a child, Eastern MS.

**Eastern MS staff:** toys and gifts for 57 children, Eastern MS.

**Edgar Calderon:** car collection, Rolling Terrace ES.





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**Jennifer Bucalo:** toys and gifts, Summit Hall ES.

**Jennifer Rooms, staff and families of Shady Grove Early Learning Center:** dozens of toys and gifts for Linkages children.

**Jesse Barefoot and the Sylvan Learning Center:** dozens of toys and gifts for Linkages children.

**Jo Wingard:** toys and gifts, Weller Road ES.

**Joan Harris, Linowes & Blocher and supporters of Bethesda Cares:** Thanksgiving food baskets and gifts, Montgomery Knolls ES, Pine Crest ES and Broad Acres ES.

**Joan Howard and Mercury Computer Systems, Inc:** food, toys and gifts for 2 families, Fox Chapel ES.

**John and Vickie Dunn and family:** MP3/CD players for Linkages teens.

**John Boston and the Goodhope Union United Methodist Church:** 10 bicycles, Greencastle ES and Banneker MS.

**John Castellano and the Child Support Enforcement team:** toys, gift cards and wrapping paper, Linkages children.

**Journey's Crossing Christian Church:** food for 4 families for Thanksgiving and 17 families during December, Wheaton Woods ES.

**Journey's Crossing Christian Church:** Thanksgiving grocery cards for 22 families and toys and gifts for 74 children, Harmony Hills and Viers Mill ES.

**Joy of Music Students:** food, gifts and funds, Weller Road ES.

**June Moore,** food for a family, Oak View ES and New Hampshire Estates ES.

**K. Snyder:** toys and gifts, Greencastle ES and Banneker MS.

**Kailling Ho:** toys and gifts for a child, Weller Road ES.

**Karen McManus & Joan Kleinman and staff from the Office of Rep. Chris Van Hollen:** gift cards and sweets for 20 teens, Eastern MS and Broad Acres ES and toys, gifts and books for Linkages children.

**Karishma Sheth:** toys and gifts for a child, Weller Road ES.

**Kathy Thompson and Follow Your Heart Yoga Center:** toys and gifts for 25 children, Fox Chapel ES.

**Kathy, Rebecca and Sarah Aitken and the Renew Group of St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church,** Thanksgiving food baskets and toys and gifts for two families, Harmony Hills ES.

**Kay Katz,** Thanksgiving grocery cards, Parkland MS.

**Keena Carter and the African American Health Initiative:** toys and gifts for a family, Greencastle ES and Banneker MS.

**Kelly Himes and the Montgomery County Senior Council of the 4H Club:** toys and gifts for Linkages children.

**Kelly Reider:** gift cards, Highland ES.

**Kids After Hours:** dozens of toys, gifts and gift cards, Greencastle ES and Banneker MS.

**Kiwanis Club of Wheaton:** 23 Thanksgiving food baskets, Highland ES.

**Leslie Hamm, Montgomery County Early Childhood Services and Scholastic Books:** dozens of books and toys, Linkages children.

**Liberty Grove Church:** hats, gloves and grocery cards, Greencastle ES and Banneker MS.

**Linda Brown:** toys and gifts for a child, Weller Road ES.

**Linda Cornelius and the American Legion Ladies Auxiliary of Bethesda:** Thanksgiving and December food baskets for 4 families, Viers Mill ES and toys and gifts for 3 children, Weller Road ES.

**Linda Owen, staff and families of Clara Barton Children's Center:** dozens of toys, gift and mittens for Linkages children.

**Linda Sarkesian and the American Legion Post 268:** Thanksgiving and December food baskets, and holiday toys and gifts, Parkland MS/Loiederman MS.

**Linda Walter:** Thanksgiving grocery cards and gift cards, Gaithersburg MS.

**Louise Venkatesan and Silver Spring Church of Christ:** Thanksgiving food baskets, toys and gifts, Montgomery Knolls ES.

**Lynn Dorsey:** gift cards, Gaithersburg MS.



**Joan Harris (right) and Bethesda Cares supporters share with Linkages.**





## Thanks to our Donors and Community Partners



- Lynn Pupkar:** toys and for a child, Weller Road ES.  
**M. Reynolds:** toys and, Greencastle ES and Banneker MS.  
**Man Club:** Silver Spring International MS families.  
**Marianne Sibal:** household goods and clothing, Wheaton Woods ES.  
**Marvin Memorial Church:** Thanksgiving baskets, toys and gifts, Montgomery Knolls ES.  
**Mary-Lynne Bratton:** Thanksgiving food basket, Montgomery Knolls ES.  
**Maryvale ES PTA and staff:** toys and gifts, Maryvale ES.  
**Mental Health Association Employees:** toys and gift cards, Linkages families.  
**Michelle Yates:** toys and gifts for 2 children, Weller Road ES.  
**Mike Green and Kiwanis Club of Olney:** Thanksgiving grocery gift cards and for food, toys and gifts for 40 children, Highland ES and the Kennedy Cluster.  
**Mike Masiello and employees of Integrated Document Solutions:** toys and gifts, Montgomery Knolls ES.  
**Mike Williams and the American Legion Post 268:** 19 Safe-way gift cards for Thanksgiving and December, Highland ES and holiday gift cards for children of 29 families, Viers Mill ES.  
**Monica Lozano Caldera:** toys and gifts, Montgomery Knolls ES.  
**Montgomery Knolls ES PEP Program:** gift cards, Montgomery Knolls ES.  
**Montgomery Knolls ES staff:** Thanksgiving food baskets, toys and gifts, coats and clothing, Montgomery Knolls ES.  
**Ms. Alice Negin:** Thanksgiving food basket for family of 10 and gift cards, Gaithersburg MS.  
**Mr. and Mrs Duncan Slidell, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Heuberger, Mr. and Mrs. Larry Hooper, Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Flynn, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Rowan, Mr. and Mrs. Russell Vernon, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas O'Conner, Mr. and Mrs. Zachary Wade:** toys and gifts, Summit Hall ES.  
**Nancy Allen, Lezlie Crosswhite, Sara Pullen and Marsha Teichman of the Mental Health Association:** toys, gifts, gift-cards and funds, Weller Road ES.  
**Nancy Segal and the Rolling Terrace ES PTA:** dozens of toys and gifts for 20 families, Rolling Terrace ES.  
**Nancy Sherwood:** toys and for 6 children, Weller Road ES.  
**Nancy Vincent:** toys and gifts, Weller Road ES.  
**Natalie Davis and employees of Processing Solutions:** toys and gifts, Montgomery Knolls ES.  
**New Hampshire Estates ES staff:** toys and gifts for 120 children, New Hampshire Estates ES.  
**Nicole Stewart, staff and families of the Sligo Creek Child Development Center:** dozens of toys and gifts for Linkages children.  
**Nina Hagan:** gift cards, Montgomery Knolls ES.  
**Noemi Ortiz:** clothing and toys: Rolling Terrace ES.  
**Norman Ochs and the Leisure World Lion's Club:** Thanksgiving food gift cards for 12 families, Harmony Hills ES.  
**Our Lady of the Visitation Parish, Darnestown:** toys, gifts and food for several families, Maryvale ES.  
**Patricia Kolberg:** grocery gift cards, Gaithersburg MS.  
**Patricia Rhodes and staff and families of the Landon School:** gift cards for 100 children, Highland ES.  
**Phil Eisenhauer and St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church:** food, gifts and toys for dozens of families, Harmony Hills ES, Viers Mill ES and Wheaton Woods ES.  
**Pine Crest ES School staff:** toys and gifts, Pine Crest ES.  
**Polly Todd and Lexis Nexis:** gift cards for Linkages teens and adults.  
**Ray David, Tim Harper and employees of Long and Foster's Bethesda Chevy-Chase Office:** Thanksgiving food basket and holiday gifts and toys, Loiederman/Parkland MS.  
**Rebecca Wagner and NRH Regional Rehab:** toys and gifts, Montgomery Knolls ES.  
**Rev. Bob Perry and Rev. Judy Birch, Interfaith Chapel at Leisureworld:** Thanksgiving grocery gift cards, Kennedy Cluster.  
**Rev. John Williams, Viers Mill Baptist Church:** 8 Thanksgiving food baskets, Viers Mill ES.  
**Rev. Mark Hriko, Linda Welder, Revonda Moser, Marie Jackson, Robyn Howland, Linnea Carlson and St. Andrew's Lutheran Church:** toys and gifts, Kennedy Cluster.



*At Research Triangle Institute, Christine Moore, pictured with Rob Adams, led RTI's employee sponsored food and gift drive, helping many families through the holiday season.*



**Lowe's Toolbox for Education** awarded Eastern Middle School PTA \$5,000 for Linkages to Literacy, funding multi-cultural, interactive arts events. Families will enjoy performances, readings, ethnic cuisine and more!





## Thanks to our Donors and Community Partners



### **Richard De Bona and Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church:**

Thanksgiving grocery cards, Kennedy Cluster.

**Rockville North Mom's Club:** toys and gifts for 2 families, Wheaton Woods ES.

**Ron Yudd and Leadership Cares:** 140 Thanksgiving food baskets, Maryvale ES, Rolling Terrace ES, New Hampshire Estates ES, Broad Acres ES, Oak View ES and Weller Road ES.

**Rosa Shelton and Millian Memorial United Methodist Church:** 20 Thanksgiving food baskets, Harmony Hills ES.

**Rosalind Zuses, Amy Christianson and Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting:** dozens of toys and gifts, Kennedy Cluster.

**Rowe Communications:** food, Thanksgiving grocery cards and holiday gift cards for 8 families and 14 children, Washington Grove ES and grocery cards and holiday gift cards, Gaithersburg MS.

**Russell Acosta and the Junior Chamber of Commerce, Rockville:** toys and gifts for 15 children, Harmony Hills ES.

**Ruth Hyde:** toys and gifts, Weller Road ES.

**Seth Markowitz and Carrie Ahnell, Mr. and Mrs. Liev Blad, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Caplon, Mr. and Mrs. Ross Davies, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Deutsch, Alan Esenstad and Tracy Three-foot, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Geier, Richard Gerard and. Tami Wolfson, Mr. and Mrs. Marc Gold, Christopher Guarino and Lauren Oltarsh, Mr. Greg Hazlett, Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Kirsch, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Kratzke, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kruger, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Li, Mr. and Mrs. Steve Machlin, Mr. and Mrs. Tim Mertz, Curtis Ollayos and Christine Hellauer, Mr. and Dr. Irwin Panitch, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Pasternak, Mr. and Mrs. William Perry, Dr. and Dr. Bryan Ray, Mr. and Mrs. Ori Reiss, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Rich, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Robinson, Steven Sachs and Kim Dettelbach, Ken Scalet and Liz Sadove, Mr. and Mrs. Tim Scott, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Shulimson and Family, Mr. and Mrs. Greg Smith, Richard Weitzner and Vicki Gaul, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Wolff, and his parents, Mr. and David Markowitz** for donating funds and food for 12 Thanksgiving food baskets and grocery gifts cards to Harmony Hills ES, in honor of his bar mitzvah.

**Sharon Keating and Ruder Finn:** toys and gifts for a family, Viers Mill ES.

**Sharon Freidman and Mental Health Association Board Members:** toys and gifts, gift-cards and funds, Parkland MS/Loiederman MS.

**Sheri Verdonk:** Thanksgiving food basket, toys and gifts, Pine Crest ES.

**Shirley Sagawa, Roxann Steinberg, Pam Brown and the Chevy Chase ES Community Service Club and PTA:** toys and gifts for 100 children, Rolling Terrace ES.

**Silver Spring YMCA Youth and Family Services staff:** toys and gifts for 3 families, Broad Acres ES.

**Sodexho, Inc., Suzi Kaplan and members of the Wonders:** 10 Thanksgiving food baskets, Montgomery Knolls ES and Pine Crest ES.

**Steve Magassy:** 11 Christmas Trees, Washington Grove ES.

**Suburban Hospital:** toys, gifts, clothing, and food for 11 families, Broad Acres ES.

**Sue Levine, Melanie Modlin and employees of NIH**

**National Library of Medicine:** toys and gifts for 4 families, Rolling Terrace ES.

**Susan Blumenthal and Temple Micah:** toys and gifts for 22 families, Highland ES.

**Susan Camille Hopkinson:** toys and gifts, Summit Hall ES.

**Susan Thornton Hobby:** toys and gifts, Weller Road ES.

**Susie Baker:** baby clothes and toiletries, Rolling Terrace ES.

**Suzi Kaplan and the Wonders Parent Group:** toys and gifts, Montgomery Knolls ES.

**Terri Stith and Argyle MS staff:** dozens of toys and gifts, Kennedy Cluster.

**The Glynn Group:** Thanksgiving grocery cards, Oak View ES/New Hampshire Estates ES.



**Carrie Buttrey, mental health counselor at Rosemount ES with Harry Lugenbeel, co-chair of First Book Montgomery County. Working with Linkages and the Montgomery County Volunteer Center's Holiday Giving Coalition, First Book shared over 1,000 books to local children this holiday season.**





## Thanks to our Donors and Community Partners



**The Tzu Chi Foundation:** toys and gifts for 40 children, Eastern MS.  
**Ti Pring Westbrook and the University of Maryland at College Park's Human Development Graduate Students:** toys and gifts, Montgomery Knolls ES.  
**Tisa Soles and Weichert Realtors in Gaithersburg:** dozens of toys and gifts for Linkages children.  
**Toni Stonestreet and HHS Immunization Outreach/Lead Prevention:** toys, gifts and food for a family, Broad Acres ES.  
**Tony Harris:** toys and gifts, Weller Road ES.  
**Vicki Scofield, Pandimonium:** gift bags, Greencastle ES and Banneker MS.  
**Viers Mill ES staff:** toys and gifts for families, Viers Mill ES.  
**Weller Road ES staff:** toys and gifts for 33 children, Weller Road ES.  
**Wendy Lim:** gift card for a child, Highland ES.  
**William Hopkinson:** toys and gifts, Summit Hall ES.  
**David Zwerdling:** grocery gift cards, Broad Acres ES families.

### SERVICES, TIME AND OTHER DONATIONS

**Alec Patrick:** computer printer for a family, Broad Acres ES.  
**Amyotropic Lateral Sclerosis Association:** 5 laptops and software for families, Broad Acres ES.  
**Barbara Pope:** clothing, Broad Acres ES.  
**Bill Schlossberg and The Gazette Newspaper:** community outreach for Holiday Giving.  
**City of Rockville:** delivering food, Maryvale ES.  
**Dr. Louis Espejo and employees of Pearle Vision (Lenscrafters) in Rockville:** eye exams and eye-glasses to 5 children, Summit Hall ES and Maryvale ES.  
**Elizabeth Vasquez:** clothing, Oak View ES and New Hampshire Estates ES.  
**Helping Hands Knitting Club of the Rockville Senior Center:** gloves, Harmony Hills ES and Viers Mill ES.  
**Iilia Bouknight, Fawn Gwynallen, Krystal Henderson, Barbara Karpas Barbara Ott, Otto Perez, Barbara Pulgar, Darnell Roberts, David Roberts, Monique Roper and Sheri Verdonk and staff of Montgomery Knolls ES,** Montgomery Knolls ES.  
**Jody Gans and North Chevy Chase PTA:** school supplies, books from book fair, Weller Road ES.  
**Joshua Rosenberg family and Barry Shapiro family:** 8 boxes of children's books, Harmony Hills ES and Viers Mill ES.  
**Juana Ormeno,** microwave oven, Oak View ES and New Hampshire Estates ES.  
**Judy Laurenson and family:** school supplies, Linkages families.  
**Karen Blinder:** teaching ESL, Rolling Terrace ES.  
**Students from Leadership Training Institute at Kennedy HS,** gift wrapping and office help, Oak View ES and New Hampshire Estates ES.  
**Leslie Klingensmith, John Kean, Teril and Michelle De Jong, Jessie and Robert Warr, Millicent Broadus, Damaris Garcia, Luis Geurrero, and Hector Gutierrez,** for serving as mentors in the Harmony Hills ES Homework Program.

**Mark Bergel and supporters of A Wider Circle:** Yoga Classes, Summit Hall ES; furniture donations and deliveries to Linkages families.  
**Montgomery Knolls ES staff:** Montgomery Knolls ES.  
**Mount Calvary:** delivering food and clothing donations, Maryvale ES.  
**Nubia Ramos and Braulio Salas:** distributing food baskets, Rolling Terrace ES.  
**Project Reboot:** 50 computers, Linkages families.

### FUNDING

**Bethesda United Church of Christ:** Viers Mill ES.  
**Deborah Delore:** Gaithersburg MS.  
**Diana Thompson:** Gaithersburg MS.  
**EmbroidMe in Rockville:** Linkages families.  
**Jason Szymkowiak:** Gaithersburg MS.  
**Kathy Johnson:** Linkages families.  
**Matthew Stone:** Linkages families.  
**Megan Scarano and the Maryland Team of State Auto Insurance Companies Eastern Regional Office:** toys and gifts for 20 children.  
**Millian United Methodist Church:** Wheaton Woods ES.  
**Mr. and Mrs. John Kean,** Harmony Hills ES.  
**Mr. James and Mrs. Linda Tokar:** Linkages families.  
**Randall Banton, in honor of Joan Howard:** Linkages families.  
**St. Andrew's Lutheran Church,** Linkages families, Wheaton area.  
**St. Matthew's Presbyterian Church:** Harmony Hills ES.  
**Susan F. Marks:** Gaithersburg MS.



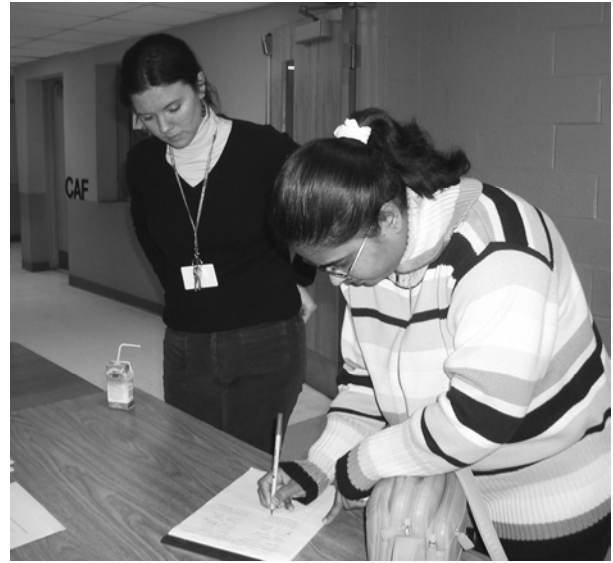
*Students participating in Kennedy HS Leadership Training Institute helping during the holidays. LTI students provide volunteer service throughout the school year for the New Hampshire Estates ES and Oak View ES communities.*

## Food Fitness and Fun comes to Linkages

The American Institutes for Research's (AIR's) *"Food, Fitness and Fun"* pilot program at Summit Hall and Viers Mill Elementary Schools was launched in January. Working closely with the school nurses Bernice Pine and Aurora Gavilan, Linkages staff recruited families and kicked the program off with a healthy meal, parent focus groups and active games for students. More than 40 children from first through fourth grades and their parents are participating in the 8 week program, designed to increase physical activity and improve children and families' nutritional choices.

The planning for *"Food, Fitness and Fun"* was initiated when the American Institutes for Research (AIR) approached Linkages to Learning to discuss ways its "AIRDROP" program might be implemented in Montgomery County. The expansion of this research-based health initiative was made possible by Sol Pelavin, the CEO of AIR and a Montgomery County resident, who challenged his workforce to bring their research into practice, while "giving back" to communities near their worksites. In response, Mary Tierney, AIR's senior research analyst and physician, worked with colleagues to propose a broad-based health education curriculum for children, created to reduce many of the health disparities disproportionately affecting the area's growing population of ethnically diverse residents.

Working collaboratively with School Health Services and Linkages, the AIR curriculum, originally presented by a nurse practitioner at a school-based health center in D.C., was adapted to an after-school model better suited to our families and schools. The *"Food, Fitness and Fun"* sessions, led by the school nurses, includes instruments to measure the project's effectiveness in helping to increase the participating children's and their parents' knowledge about the importance of physical activity and sound nutrition. A longer term objective is to reduce and prevent childhood obesity among participants. Each of the eight lessons includes a healthy snack, physical activity and nutrition education and includes parent components.



**Linkages site coordinator Judy Jenik with parent at AIR's Food, Fitness and Fun program at Viers Mill ES.**

AIR's Dr. Tierney believes that by "collaborating with folks like Linkages who are already in the schools, we can create very effective health education curriculum to be used by health practitioners, educators and other professionals interested in improving nutrition and increasing the levels of physical activity as a way to prevent obesity."

Tierney continues, "Linkages to Learning offers the potential to expand a small pilot to more people who could benefit from the program. Unlike our first pilot, which was offered during the school day and was taught in a classroom by a nurse practitioner, this program appears to be accessible to many more communities through its after-school format. We are especially excited about working with Linkages, because if the pilot is successful, we could potentially expand the model to serve additional schools, which could have a great impact," said Tierney.

Irm Pichot, nurse administrator and School Health Services' representative on Linkages Resource Team, agrees, adding that "by working together with our community partners, we are identifying many ways to help our families learn to make positive behavior changes and healthier choices in their diets."

"Since we know health problems related to obesity challenge "at risk" populations most, we are hopeful that our efforts will lead to long-lasting health improvements for communities such as those served by Linkages," said Pichot.



## A Warm Welcome to New Staff:

**(Maria) Alexandra Cuadra**,  
site coordinator/case manager, Rosemont ES

**Carrie Buttrey**, mental health counselor,  
Rosemont ES

**Laura Gray**, site coordinator, Highland ES

**Karen Cooper**, mental health counselor,  
Kennedy Cluster.

**Patricia Rodriguez**, case manager,  
Parkland MS/Loiederman MS

**Catherine Dooley**, community service aide,  
Parkland MS/Loiederman MS

**Susan Eastman**, mental health counselor,  
Rosemont ES

**Monica Lozano**, mental health counselor,  
Eastern Middle School

## ...and a Fond Farewell to Former Colleagues:

**Eveling Rodriguez**, case manager,  
Parkland MS

**Jessica Colon**, mental health counselor,  
Maryvale ES

**Marta Contreras**, mental health counselor,  
Broad Acres ES



Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive  
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Alternative formats available

## Coming Soon: Invitations to Linkages 4th Annual Mothers Empowerment Tea!



Linkages' Mothers Empowerment Tea funds a range of opportunities for mothers to increase self-esteem, develop supportive relationships and gain knowledge about their communities. These initiatives include parent support and educational groups, Mothers Retreats, parent-led enrichment programs and employment training. By building confident, self-aware and economically secure parents, Linkages helps children to become healthier, safer and more successful.

